

What is claimed is:

1. A cartridge apparatus for use in treating an airway condition of a patient and for use in combination with a handle sized to be hand-grasped by an operator and having an actuator to be selectively actuated by said operator, said cartridge comprising:

- an elongated implant of biocompatible material sized to be embedded within a tissue of said airway;

- a needle having a distal tip for penetrating into said tissue, said needle having an axially extending bore;

- said implant disposed within said bore at said distal tip;

- said cartridge having a proximal end adapted to be coupled to said handle for said implant to be ejected from said distal tip upon actuation of said actuator.

2. A cartridge according to claim 1 wherein said actuator includes a driver positioned to move upon actuation of said actuator, said cartridge further comprising:

- an obturator disposed for slideable movement within said bore of said needle;

- said obturator disposed to be moved by said driver toward said implant upon actuation of said actuator when said cartridge is coupled to said handle.

3. A cartridge according to claim 2 wherein:

- said obturator is carried within said bore of said needle for movement therewith when said cartridge is uncoupled from said handle.

4. A cartridge according to claim 2 wherein said bore is positioned relative to said proximal end for said driver to be slide-ably received within said bore when said cartridge is coupled to said handle.
5. A cartridge according to claim 1 wherein said handle has a handle coupling having a predetermined geometry, said cartridge further comprising:
a cartridge coupling at said proximal end of said cartridge and having a mating geometry to mated with said predetermined geometry with said cartridge and handle aligned for said implant to be ejected from said distal tip upon actuation of said actuator.
6. A cartridge according to claim 5 further comprising a release for releasing said cartridge from said handle.
7. A cartridge according to claim 1 wherein said implant is adapted to alter a dynamic response of said tissue following placement of said implant in said tissue.
8. A cartridge according to claim 1 wherein said implant includes a material for promoting tissue in-growth into said implant following placement of said implant into said tissue.
9. A cartridge according to claim 1 wherein said implant is sized slightly greater than said bore for said implant to expand upon ejection from said bore.
10. A cartridge according to claim 8 wherein said implant is formed of multiple fibers including fibers of said material for promoting tissue in-growth.
11. A cartridge according to claim 10 wherein the multiple fibers are twisted

together along a length of the implant with the fibers having terminal ends at opposite ends of the implant.

12. A cartridge according to claim 10 wherein the multiple fibers are braided together.
13. A cartridge according to claim 1 wherein said cartridge is contained within a sterile container.
14. A cartridge kit for use in treating an airway condition of a patient and for use in combination with a handle sized to be hand-grasped by an operator and having an actuator mechanism to be selectively actuated by said operator, said cartridge kit comprising:
 - a container;
 - a plurality of cartridge contained within said container with each comprising:
 - an implant of biocompatible material sized to be embedded within a tissue of said airway;
 - a needle having a distal tip for penetrating into said tissue, said needle having an axially extending bore;
 - said implant disposed within said bore at said distal tip;
 - a proximal end adapted to be coupled to said handle for said implant to be ejected from said distal tip upon actuation of said actuator.
15. A cartridge kit according to claim 14 wherein said actuator includes a driver positioned to move upon actuation of said actuator, each of said cartridges further comprising:
 - an obturator disposed for slideable movement within said bore of said needle;

said obturator disposed to be moved by said driver toward said implant upon actuation of said actuator when said cartridge is coupled to said handle.

16. A cartridge kit according to claim 15 wherein:

said obturator is carried within said bore of said needle for movement therewith when said cartridge is uncoupled from said handle.

17. A cartridge kit according to claim 15 wherein said bore is positioned relative to said proximal end for said driver to be slide-ably received within said bore when said cartridge is coupled to said handle.

18. A cartridge kit according to claim 14 wherein said handle has a handle coupling having a predetermined geometry, each of said cartridges further comprising:
a cartridge coupling at said proximal end of said cartridge and having a mating geometry to mated with said predetermined geometry with said cartridge and handle aligned for said implant to be ejected from said distal tip upon actuation of said actuator.

19. A cartridge kit according to claim 18 further comprising a release for releasing said cartridge from said handle.

20. A cartridge kit according to claim 14 wherein said implant is adapted to alter a dynamic response of said tissue following placement of said implant in said tissue.

21. A cartridge kit according to claim 14 wherein said implant includes a material for promoting tissue in-growth into said implant following placement of said implant into said tissue.

22. A cartridge kit according to claim 14 wherein said implant is sized slightly greater than said bore for said implant to expand upon ejection from said bore.
23. A cartridge kit according to claim 21 wherein said implant is formed of multiple fibers including fibers of said material for promoting tissue in-growth.
24. A cartridge kit according to claim 23 wherein the multiple fibers are twisted together along a length of the implant with the fibers having terminal ends at opposite ends of the implant.
25. A cartridge kit according to claim 23 wherein the multiple fibers are braided together.
26. A cartridge kit according to claim 23 wherein said cartridge is container is sterile.
27. A cartridge according to claim 1, wherein the proximal end of the cartridge includes a plurality of raised gripping elements.